



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Four Convicted in Armed Kidnapping - Defendants Bound, Beat and Burned Victim in Retaliation For Burglary -**

WASHINGTON - Three men and a woman have been convicted of crimes stemming from the armed kidnapping and assault of a Maryland resident who used to work with them in the distribution of PCP, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced today.

The jury returned its verdicts last week, following a three-week trial in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Jammal Hale, 24, Patrick Waldrop, 21, and Ramona Watson, 29, all of Washington, D.C., were convicted of armed kidnapping and possession of a firearm during the commission of a crime of violence. Devin Burgess, 23, of District Heights, Md., was convicted of kidnapping. They are to be sentenced June 24, 2011 by the Honorable Ann O'Regan Keary.

According to the government's evidence, the defendants and the victim had engaged in the distribution of PCP during the early months of 2010. The victim, then 20, became disillusioned with his co-conspirators in March of 2010, when he was left to take the blame after Prince George's County police caught him and one of the defendants in a vehicle with approximately one ounce of PCP, and further after another defendant stood by while he was assaulted just days before the kidnapping.

The victim responded by breaking into an apartment shared by two of the defendants on March 25, 2010, and stealing PCP and at least one firearm from his co-conspirators. The defendants punished the victim by kidnapping and torturing him. They took the victim to multiple locations, where he was bound with duct tape, beaten, burned, and interrogated until he confessed to the theft, revealed the identity of two others involved in the theft, and helped recover the stolen firearm.

The victim was eventually taken to the Benning Park Recreation Center, where the defendants solicited others to beat him, strip him of his pants, and throw him into a dumpster. The victim managed to escape and obtain assistance from family members.

In announcing the verdicts, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the excellent work of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers who investigated the kidnapping and lent other expertise and support, including Detectives Anthony Johnson, Jeffrey Dixon, and Thomas Sepulveda, and Officers Wade Zech and Joseph Abdalla. U.S. Attorney Machen also commended members of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Criminal Investigation Unit, whose investigation and witness security efforts were exemplary. In particular, he cited the work of Investigator Melissa Matthews, as well as Lawrence Grasso, Christopher Brophy, Tommy Miller, Durand Odom, Nelson Rhone, and Mark Crawford. U.S. Attorney Machen also praised the investigative efforts and expertise of the FBI Special Agent who worked on the case, and he thanked Sergeant Jeremy Bull of the Prince George's County Police Department for his contributions to the investigation.

U.S. Attorney Machen also praised the outstanding work of the U.S. Attorney's Office's Victim-Witness Assistance Unit, including Jennifer Clark, Debra Cannon, Shawn Slade, and Tanya Via, who provided critical support and services to civilian witnesses. U.S. Attorney Machen recognized the assistance of Leif Hickling and Paul Howell, of the Litigation Services Unit, as well as Paralegal Specialists Fern Rhedrick and Antoinette Sakamsa, whose work was essential in preparing the case for trial. Finally, he expressed his special appreciation to Assistant U.S. Attorneys J.P. Cooney and Adam Schwartz, who investigated and prosecuted the case.

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